



JACKSON MAGAZINE'S IMPACT AWARDS

New in 2026, the Impact Award celebrates the people, businesses, and projects that are shaping the future of Jackson County. Whether through innovation, leadership, or community investment, these honorees are recognized for making a measurable difference in the lives of Jackson residents.

Nominations are submitted by community members who have seen firsthand the positive influence of the nominees. Depending on the award final selections are made either by a panel of local leaders who evaluate the scope, sustainability, and significance of each nominee's impact or by community voting.

Each award recipient is featured in a dedicated article in the December edition of Jackson Magazine, highlighting their story, achievements, and vision for Jackson's future.

The 2026 categories include:

- ▶ Young Professional of the Year
- ▶ Volunteer of the Year
- ▶ Community Champion
- ▶ Corporate Giving
- ▶ Hometown Hero
- ▶ New Business
Championed by
Accelerate Jackson County
- ▶ Legacy

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Criteria:

- ▶ Must be 35 years of age or younger as of January 1, 2027
- ▶ Must work for a Jackson County-based employer or be a full-time remote employee residing in Jackson County

Summary:

This award honors a rising professional who is excelling in their career and actively engaged in extracurricular or community activities. Whether employed locally or working remotely for an out-of-county organization, the recipient will exemplify future leadership and serve as a role model for Jackson County's next generation of changemakers.

Voting Method:

Community-wide nomination, followed by a questionnaire. Final selection is made by a committee.



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Criteria:

- ▶ Must volunteer with a Jackson County-based nonprofit or community initiative

Summary:

This award recognizes an individual whose volunteer efforts have made a meaningful and sustained impact on Jackson County. Nominees must demonstrate a deep commitment to service and submit a completed questionnaire.

Voting Method:

Community-wide nomination, followed by a questionnaire. Final selection is made by a committee.

COMMUNITY CHAMPION

Criteria:

- ▶ Individuals must live, work, or volunteer within Jackson County, Michigan
- ▶ Organizations must operate within or serve Jackson County, Michigan

Summary:

Awarded to an individual or organization that has made a substantial and positive impact on Jackson County through leadership, advocacy, or innovation. The work may be conducted locally or beyond county lines, provided the results directly benefit Jackson County residents.

Voting Method:

Community-wide nomination, followed by a questionnaire. Final selection is made by a committee.

CORPORATE GIVING

Criteria:

- ▶ Must be a registered corporation with a headquarters or physical business location in Jackson County, Michigan

Summary:

This award honors a company that has demonstrated sustained philanthropic commitment to Jackson County over the past five years. Nominees must submit a questionnaire and optional supporting documentation.

Voting Method:

Community-wide nomination, followed by a questionnaire. A selection committee identifies the top 5 candidates, and the final winner is determined by public vote.

HOMETOWN HERO

Criteria:

- ▶ Must work within Jackson County in front line, military, or emergency services.

Summary:

This award recognizes an individual who consistently goes above and beyond to protect and serve the Jackson County community. It may honor a lifetime of service or a singular act of heroism that placed the individual in harm's way for the benefit of others. This award may be given posthumously with the family's consent.

Voting Method:

Community-wide nomination, followed by a questionnaire. A selection committee identifies the top 5 candidates, and the final winner is determined by public vote.

NEW BUSINESS

Championed by  ACCELERATE
JACKSON COUNTY

Criteria:

- ▶ Must be a for-profit business based in Jackson County, Michigan
- ▶ Must have been established within the past three years (incorporated on or after January 1, 2024)

Summary:

This award honors a newly established business that has demonstrated early success and earned the support of the Jackson County community. Whether through innovation, strong leadership, customer satisfaction, or operational excellence, the recipient will be recognized for contributing to the county's economic vitality and showing promise for long-term sustainability.

Voting Method:

Community-wide nomination, followed by a questionnaire. A selection committee identifies the top 5–10 candidates, and the final winner is determined by public vote.

LEGACY

Summary:

The Legacy Award honors an individual or organization whose long-term contributions have left a lasting imprint on Jackson County. This recognition is reserved for those whose work has shaped the community in meaningful and enduring ways.

Voting Method:

Community-wide nomination, followed by a questionnaire. Final selection is made by Jackson Magazine's editorial team.